A

SERMON

Occaſioned by the

DEATH

OF THE

Rev. Mr. Samuel Bruce,

Who departed this Life

December the 5th, 1737.

In the Twenty-ſeventh Year of his Age.

PREACH'D IN

Hare-Court, Alderſgate-ſtreet,

December the 11th, 1737.

By PETER GOODWIN.

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HEB. xiii. 7.

Remember them which have the Rule over you, who have ſpoken unto you the Word of God; whoſe Faith follow, conſidering the End of their Converſation.

IT having pleaſed the all-wiſe and ſovereign Diſpoſer of all Things to make a ſudden and ſore Breach in this Church, you are called this Day to Weeping, and Mourning, and Lamentation. And who is there amongſt you, that, having any Concern for the Ark of God, can forbear giving ſome vent to his Paſſions, or contain from deploring the Loſs you have ſuffered in the Death of ſo able a Miniſter of the New Teſtament; one that was ſo well qualified for Service among you, who has been render'd ſo uſeful for your Edification and Comfort, and who, by the Courſe of Nature, might have been ſo for many Years to come?

But the ſovereign Arbiter of Life and Death, *in whoſe Hands our Times are, and who gives no Account of his Matters*, has been pleaſed to deprive you of that Bleſſing, and call him out of our World, at a Time when we apprehend there is ſo great a need of ſuch uſeful Inſtruments of Service. And altho' it becomes you with Silence and Submiſſion to acquieſce in his wiſe and ſovereign Diſpoſals, and be in Subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live; yet you ought not to be inſenſible of your Loſs, or of the Hand of God in it. If the Lord expects we ſhould be affected, *when his Hand is but lifted up* *; much more when it falls ſo heavily, and ſmites us in ſo tender a Part. But I am ſenſible, that with reſpect to many of you, I need ſay nothing to provoke, but rather to moderate your Sorrow. We ſhould indeed be affected with, *and humbled under the mighty Hand of God*; but we ſhould not indulge an inordinate Grief, nor mourn like thoſe who have no Hope. It is a rational and a religious Concern that this Diſpenſation calls for: not ſuch as may hinder our attending to the Duties of our Chriſtian Profeſſion; but ſuch as may have a proper Influence upon our Spirits and Behaviour, and may excite us to a wiſe and ſuitable Improvement of ſuch a Providence. And that I may be aſſiſting to you therein, I have choſen the

* Iſa. xxvi. 11.

Words

Words that have been read for the Subject of our Meditations on this mournful Occaſion.

THE Deſign of this Epiſtle was to eſtabliſh the *Hebrews* in the Doctrines and Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and to arm them againſt Apoſtacy, or relapſing from Chriſt to *Moſes*, and from the Goſpel to the *Jewiſh* Law. To this end, the Apoſtle repreſents the ſuperlative Excellency of Chriſt in his Perſon and Office. With reſpect to his Perſon, he proves him to be the Son of God, and infinitely greater than the higheſt Angel. And with reſpect to his Office, he ſhews Him to be a greater Prophet than *Moſes*, and a greater Prieſt than *Aaron*; the Dignity and perfect Efficacy of whoſe Prieſthood, together with the Inſufficiency of the Levitical one, he conſiders at large. And he intermixeth many Inferences and Exhortations; all tending to ſhew the Unreaſonableneſs, Folly and Danger of falling back again from the Chriſtian Faith to the *Jewiſh* Religion, and to ſupport and ſpirit them under the Perſecutions that might tend to diſhearten and turn them aſide from it. And he cloſeth the Epiſtle, by recommending ſeveral excellent Duties to them, as the proper Fruits of their Faith: And among the reſt, ſuggeſts thoſe that Chriſtians owe to their Miniſters; and that not only to thoſe that are alive, *ver.* 17.——but to thoſe that are deceaſed, in the Words of the Text: *Remember them which*

which have the Rule over you, who have ſpoken unto you the Word of God; whoſe Faith follow, conſidering the End of their Converſation.

THE former Part of the Verſe ſeems according to our Tranſlation, to refer to thoſe that were then alive. But in the Original it is, *Remember, or be mindful of your Guides* *. And whom he means by theſe, is declared in the next Clauſe, by which it appears, that he ſpeaks of ſuch as were deceaſed, *who have ſpoken unto you the Word of God.* He calls upon them to remember them, which ſuppoſeth them to be abſent: And he ſpeaks of them, as thoſe that have finiſhed their Courſe, when he exhorts them to conſider the End of their Converſation.

IN the Words we have a Duty enjoined, which is *to remember and imitate the Faith and Practice of our deceaſed Miniſters:* And a great Motive or Encouragement to it, *Conſidering the End of their Converſation.* Accordingly, the Method I ſhall obſerve in diſcourſing from them, ſhall be this:

I. To conſider the Duty here directed to.

II. To conſider the Force of the Motive here made uſe of. And then, as our Time will permit,

III. MAKE an Application of the whole.

* Μνημονεύετε τῶν ἡγουμένων ὑμῶν.

I. I ſhall conſider the Duty here directed unto. *Remember your ſpiritual Guides, who have ſpoken unto you the Word of God, whoſe Faith follow.* And here two Things offer themſelves to our Conſideration, *viz.* The Character and Work of the Perſons recommended; and the Regard that is due to them.

1. THE Character and Work of the Perſons recommended. They are ſuch *as have had the Rule over you, and have ſpoken to you the Word of God.* The former of theſe denotes their Dignity, and the latter the Work and Employments in which they were engaged. The Word (ἡγούμενος) properly ſignifies *Dux viæ*, one that goeth before, and leadeth and directeth others in the way. It is ſometimes uſed for a Ruler *; ſometimes for a principal Perſon amongſt others †. But here, and *ver.* 17. of this Chapter, it ſignifieth Church Officers. He ſpeaks, ſay *Chryſoſtom* and others, περὶ Ἐπισκόπων, of Biſhops, which is true, if it be meant of ſcriptural Biſhops, ſuch as are in the New Teſtament ſtiled *Paſtors, Elders, Overſeers*, &c. who reſide among and watch over their reſpective Flocks; who preſide in, who go before, and lead, and guide their Churches, and feed them with Knowledge and Underſtanding, and that not according to their own

* Matt. xi. 6. † Acts xv. 22.

Will,

Will, but according to the Mind and Will of God made known in his Word. For that is their Work and Employment, as here deſcribed. They are ſuch as have ſpoken to you the Word of God. The Matter of their Preaching was the Word of God; and the Expreſſion intimates their Diligence therein. (1.) The Matter of their Preaching was the Word of God. This is the ſole Object of the Faith of Chriſtians, and the outward Means of communicating the Mind and Grace of God to them. This contains in it all Things neceſſary for Faith and Practice, and is the only Standard both of Doctrine and of Duty; the Teſt by which all Creeds and Confeſſions, all Opinions and Practices are to be tried. *To the Law and to the Teſtimony, if they ſpeak not according to this Word, it is becauſe there is no Light in them* *. And it is the great Means, in the Hand of the Divine Spirit, of *turning Men from Darkneſs to Light*, and *from the Power of Satan to the living God* †; and of building up the Saints *in Holineſs and Comfort thro' Faith unto Salvation* §. Upon this doth the Being, the Life, the Bleſſedneſs of the Church depend: And therefore to this do all faithful Guides attend, as to their Rule. It is not Tradition, they are not the Canons of Councils, nor the Deciſions of Synods, nor any human

* Iſa. viii, 20. † Acts xxvi. 18. § Rom. i. 16.

Conſtitutions

Conſtitutions whatever (not even thoſe that are graced with the Stile and Title of Apoſtolical;) but it is the Word of God that is the Object of their Faith, and the Matter of their Preaching. This they believe themſelves; this they ſtudy and preach to others. And, notwithſtanding all their other Accompliſhments, if they be ignorant of this, they will prove but blind Guides: *For if any Man teach otherwiſe, and conſent not to wholeſome Words, even the Words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, (i. e.)* ſuch Words as Chriſt delivered to his Apoſtles, and they to the Church, not only by Word of Mouth, but in their Writings; *he is proud, knowing nothing* *. Whereas *theſe are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs:* And where they are accompanied with a transforming Power, and Influence upon the Heart and Life, *will render the Man of God perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good Works* †. The Matter of their Preaching is the Word of God. And the Expreſſion in the Text, (2.) Intimates their Diligence therein. They have ſpoken to you the Word of God. They were not idle, but laborious in their Work, as all that have Honour due to them, are ſaid *to labour in the Word and Doctrine* §. This they make their main Buſineſs, and

* 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4. † 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.
§ 1 Tim. v. 17.

they lay out themſelves therein. They *watch for the Souls committed to their Care* §: watch for them, not to enſnare, but to ſave them; not to gain them to themſelves, but to gain them to Chriſt; to inſtruct, and warn, and reprove, and exhort; and by all Means to build them up in Knowledge, and Faith, and Holineſs, and Comfort. And they watch hereunto with all Diligence, and Faithfulneſs, and Perſeverance. They know the Greatneſs of the Charge, the Importance of the Truſt committed to them, and the awful Account they muſt give up unto God; and they tremble at the Thought of the dreadful Woe denounced againſt idle Shepherds *. They are ſuch as have obtained Mercy to be faithful: And as they know the Worth of Souls; ſo the Taſte and Experience they have themſelves had of the Grace of God, and the Love of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, conſtrain them to lay out themſelves to the uttermoſt in the Service of ſo good and gracious a Maſter, and for the Good of Souls, for the convincing and converting Sinners, and for the edifying and comforting the Saints. Where theſe Things concur, *i. e.* when Miniſters make the Word of God the Matter of their Preaching, and exerciſe themſelves with all Care and Diligence therein, there is nothing wanting to compleat the Character of a faithful Guide, but only this,

§ Heb. xiii. 17. * Ezek. xxxiv. 3, 4.

that

that he himſelf lives the Word he preaches to others; that he holdeth forth the Word of Life in his Practice, as well as in his Doctrine; and be *an Example to the Believers in Word, in Converſation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity* *. This is the Character and Work of the Perſons recommended in our Text. They are ſuch ſpiritual Guides, as ſpeak the Word of God, and are careful to regulate their own Lives and Behaviour according to that Word which they preach. And great is the Deference that is due to ſuch, while they live; and great the Regard that ſhould be paid to their Memory, when they are dead. Which leads me,

II. To conſider the Duty that is owing to ſuch, as it is expreſſed in the Text. Now, this lies in two Things, in remembring and imitating them.

FIRST, we are to remember our ſpiritual Guides, *who have ſpoken to us the Word of God.* We ſhould be mindful of them, their Perſons, and the Work they have been employed in for our Good. This, to be ſure, is included in it, *viz.* the bearing them in our Minds, and often thinking on them, as thoſe whom we highly eſteemed and valued. We are enjoined thus to behave towards them, while they live, and *to eſteem them very highly in Love, for their Work's ſake* †. And

* Theſſ. v. 13.

the ſame Reſpect we are to pay to them, when they have finiſhed their Courſe, and are removed from us by Death. Suddenly to forget them, ſaith the excellent Dr. *Owen*, is too plain a Proof, that we have not profited by their Labours, as we ought to have done. But that which is principally intended, is a moral and practical Remembrance of them. It is not merely to retain their Names or Perſons in our Memory, or to make them the Subject of our Diſcourſe and Converſation; much leſs to remember them for any of thoſe irreligious Purpoſes which too much prevailed in the former Ages of Darkneſs and Superſtition, when Men placed much Devotion in aſſembling at the Tombs of the departed Saints and Martyrs, and celebrating the Times of their Death with a great Mixture of heatheniſh Rites and Ceremonies, which iſſued at length in Invocation, Adoration, and various Acts of religious Worſhip. There is nothing of this here enjoined; no Prayers for or to them; no Dedication of Temples or Altars to their Memory; no preſerving, much leſs adoring their Relicks: But it is an affectionate and practical Remembrance of them, that is intended. We cannot think of our departed Miniſters, their Uſefulneſs to us, and the Benefit we received from them while they lived, in a due Manner, but we ſhall be ſenſibly affected with, and grieve for our Loſs of them; as

the

the *Aſian* Chriſtians and Elders of *Epheſus* did at the Words of the Apoſtle, when he told them, *They ſhould ſee his Face no more* *. Altho' God intends it for their Gain, and takes them away at the Time appointed in his wiſe Counſels, and which beſt ſuits their Circumſtances; yet even then we have Cauſe to grieve for ourſelves, and the Church of God, who are deprived of the Aſſiſtance of ſuch uſeful Inſtruments: And much more, if we have Reaſon to apprehend, they are taken away for our Unprofitableneſs and Non-Improvement by their Labours, and *from the Evil that may be coming upon thoſe that ſurvive* †. It is an affectionate, and it is a practical Remembrance of them; for it is,

SECONDLY, ſo to remember, as to follow and imitate them in their Faith and Converſation. Now, their Faith may be conſidered either objectively, or ſubjectively: objectively, for the Faith they profeſſed, believed, and preached; or ſubjectively, for the Grace of Faith in them, whereby they believed the Truth, and lived anſwerably to it. We may take in both Senſes here. If we take it in the former Senſe, then to follow their Faith, is to be ſtedfaſt in the Profeſſion of that Truth which they preached to us. And as they ſpake the Word of God, and profeſſedly made that the Rule and Standard of their Belief and Preaching, we

* Acts xx. 38. † Iſa. lvii. 1.

ſhould

ſhould carefully ſee to it, that we ſtedfaſtly adhere to the Doctrines of Faith, delivered in the ſacred Oracles: That the Faith we profeſs, be the ſincere Doctrine of Chriſtianity, and the pure Word of God, free from all Mixture of human Additions and Inventions. We are to follow the Faith of our ſpiritual Guides, but no further than they, in their Belief and Preaching, *followed Chriſt*, and thoſe that were inſpired by him *. Otherwiſe our Faith would ſtand upon the Authority of Men, and not on the Word of God. But being ſatisfied that what they believed and preached is indeed the Truth, as it is in Jeſus, we ſhould ſtedfaſtly adhere to it, *and not ſuffer ourſelves to be ſhaken and removed from it by every Wind of new Doctrine* †. A Caution, this, moſt neceſſary and ſeaſonable at this Day, wherein there is ſo lamentable a Defection from the great and important Truths of the Goſpel. In Oppoſition to which, we are required *to hold faſt the Profeſſion of our Faith without wavering* §. And that this is in part the Apoſtle's Meaning in our Text, is plain from what follows immediately after it; *Whoſe Faith follow, conſidering the End of their Converſation, Jeſus Chriſt the ſame, Yeſterday, and to Day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and ſtrange Doctrines: For it*

* 1 Cor. iv. 16. chap. xi. 1. † Eph. iv. 14.
§ Heb. x. 23.

is a good Thing that the Heart be eſtabliſhed with Grace.

But I ſhall rather conſider their Faith in the other Senſe, as it is taken ſubjectively for the Grace of Faith in them, by which they believed the Truth, and lived anſwerably to it. I ſay, by which they believed the Truth, and lived anſwerably to it: For by their Faith is meant the whole Exerciſe, and the whole Effect of it, as it purified their Hearts, and brought forth Fruit in their Lives. It comprehends a firm Belief of the Doctrines of the Goſpel, and the Fruit and Effect of this Belief in a good and holy Converſation. And to follow their Faith in this Senſe, is ſteadily and perſeveringly to imitate them in thoſe divine Graces with which they were adorned, and in thoſe holy Practices in which they abounded. *By theſe they, being dead, yet ſpeak unto us.* And what do they ſpeak unto us, but *that we ſhould be Followers of them, who thro' Faith and Patience are gone before to inherit the Promiſes* *? (*i. e.*) that we ſhould be Followers of them in theſe and the like divine Graces; ſhould be concerned to have them implanted in our Hearts, and drawn forth into Act and Exerciſe in our Lives. It is not a dead or a barren Faith we are called to the Imitation of; but a Faith that worketh by Love, and is productive of the Fruits

* Heb. vi. 12.

of

of Holineſs in the Life. It is required of all that believe in God, *that they be careful to maintain good Works* *. As a good Life ſhould never be ſeparated from a ſound Faith; ſo our Knowledge and Belief of the Doctrine of Chriſt ſhould manifeſt itſelf (and it will do ſo, if it be a Faith of the ſpecial Operation of God) in a good Converſation. *Who is a wiſe Man, and endued with Knowledge amongſt you? let him ſhew*, ſaith the Apoſtle †, *out of a good Converſation, his Works with Meekneſs of Wiſdom.* And this is what a faithful Guide is deſirous to excel in; to live as he teaches, and to be a burning and ſhining Light; to ſhine by the Exemplarineſs of his Converſation, as well as to burn with Zeal for God, and Love to the Souls of Men. We cannot, therefore, with any Propriety, be ſaid to follow their Faith, if we be not careful to abound in all thoſe Fruits of Righteouſneſs, which are by Chriſt to the Praiſe and Glory of God, and of which they have been Patterns to us. And, once more, we are to do this ſteadily and perſeveringly, not only beginning well, but holding out in this good Courſe unto the End. We are to conſider the End of their Converſation; to keep our Eye upon them in their whole Courſe of Faith and Obedience, till they come to the finiſhing Point, and with Conſtancy and Perſeverance, to

* Tit. iii. 8. † Jam. iii. 13.

follow

follow them therein, as being ſenſible, *They are only ſuch as endure to the End, that ſhall be ſaved* *, *and that we muſt be faithful unto Death, if we would receive the Crown of eternal Life* †. Thus have we hinted at the Character and Work of the Perſons here recommended, and the Honour and Reſpect we ſhould pay to their Memory, when they are removed from us; and I can but juſt touch upon the ſecond general Head propounded, which is,

II. To conſider the Force of the Motive here made uſe of, *conſidering the End of their Converſation.* The Word (Ἔκβασις, here rendered the End) ſignifies their Egreſs or Departure out of this Life. And we may conceive two Things that the Apoſtle would have us think upon, *viz.* the Manner of their Exit out of this World, and the Bleſſedneſs they are made Partakers of in the other World. Attentively conſider, as their Diligence, and Conſtancy, and Faithfulneſs in their Work; ſo how they finiſhed at laſt. Contemplate the Concluſion of their Lives; how quietly, how comfortably, how joyfully they finiſhed their Courſe; with what Patience and Courage, with what Comfort and joyful Aſſurance of future Happineſs, they

* Mat. x. 22. † Rev. ii. 10.

left the World *. They died indeed, but it was with a bleſſed Calm and Serenity of Mind, with peaceful Reflections on their paſt Sincerity, and with a firm and ſteady Perſuaſion of future Bleſſedneſs. Thus it was with the Apoſtle *Paul*. When he was juſt ready to be offered up, he could reflect with Comfort upon his paſt Conduct; *I have fought a good Fight, I have finiſhed my Courſe, I have kept the Faith:* And he could look forward with a bleſſed Aſſurance, *Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, ſhall give me at that Day* †. Or however this be (as ſometimes it ſeemeth good to our ſovereign Lord to hide his Face, and ſuſpend the comforting Influences of his Spirit from ſome of his dear Children and Servants in their latter Moments;) yet, conſider their happy Eſcape from all the Trials and Difficulties, from all the Sorrows and Sufferings that attended them in the preſent Life, and the glorious State they are entered upon in the other World. This is elſewhere called *the End of our Faith, even the Salvation of our Souls* §. And it is likewiſe repreſented as the final Iſſue of a Courſe of holy Obedience; *Ye have your Fruit unto Holineſs*, ſaith the

* Pſal. xxxvii. 37. † 2 Tim. iv. 8. § 1 Pet. i. 9.

Apoſtle,

Apoſtle, *and the End everlaſting Life* *. And this is an End, which all ſuch Guides, as with Courage and Faithfulneſs ſpeak the Word of God, ſhall be brought unto: For *when the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, ſuch ſhall receive a Crown of Glory, that fadeth not away* †, *(i. e.)* an high Degree of everlaſting Glory.

This being the Meaning of this Clauſe, the Force of the Motive appears evident and plain to all. For what greater Motive and Encouragement can there be, ſo to remember them that have ſpoken to us the Word of God, as to imitate their Faith and Holineſs, than this Conſideration, *viz.* the Chearfulneſs, the Comfort, the firm and ſteady Perſuaſion with which ſuch Perſons die; together with the Glory and Bleſſedneſs of that State they are poſſeſſed of after Death? Who would not be glad to leave this World, in ſuch a Calmneſs and Serenity of Mind, and with ſuch a comfortable Aſſurance, at leaſt a good Hope thro' Grace, of a bleſſed Eternity? Wicked Men, like *Balaam* of old §, *wiſh to die the Death of the Righteous, and that their latter End might be like his:* But it is in vain; for there is no way to have the Comfort of ſuch a Death, unleſs we have the Faith, and are enabled to live the Life of the Righteous; nor ſhall we ever be

* Rom. vi, 22. † Pet. v. 4. § Num. xxiii. 10.

admitted to the ſame happy State he is in after Death. Wherefore, as ever we deſire this, let us pray for the Spirit of Grace to work that Faith, and implant thoſe Principles of Grace and Holineſs in us, which they were favoured and adorned with; and carefully attend to the Exhortation of the Apoſtle, *not to be ſlothful, but Followers of them, who thro' Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes.* There is no way but this (of imitating their Faith and good Converſation) to attain the Happineſs they are poſſeſſed of. But if we are enabled to ſhew the ſame Diligence that they did, we may reaſonably and warrantably expect to have the ſame full Aſſurance of Hope unto the End, which they had. But it is Time I ſhould proceed,

III. To make a ſhort Application of the whole. And,

1. If we are to remember and imitate the Faith and Holineſs of our ſpiritual Guides, it ought certainly to be the Care of all that pretend to that Character, to ſet ſuch an Example of Faith and Holineſs, as that it may be the Duty of thoſe that ſurvive, to remember and imitate them. Alas! how many are there, who take upon them this Office, that by Luxury and Idleneſs, by Intemperance and Profaneneſs, are a Reproach to their Profeſſion, and the Scandal

dal of their Order; and inſtead of deſerving an honourable Remembrance, deſerve to have their Names lie in everlaſting Oblivion?

2. WHAT Encouragement is here to thoſe that ſpeak the Word of God, to be diligent and faithful in the Work and Duty of their Office; ſince this is the Way not only to have due Honour and Reſpect paid to their Memory, but to ſecure to themſelves an high Degree of everlaſting Happineſs and Glory, when they ſhall attain the End of their Faith and Converſation?

3. (FOR I can but juſt mention theſe Things) If we ſhould remember them that have ſpoken to us the Word of God, we ſhould endeavour to recollect that Word which they have ſpoken to us. We ſhould think upon the great Truths they have opened, the Duties they have exhorted to, the Sins they have cautioned and warned us againſt, the Counſels, and Reproofs, and Admonitions they have from Time to Time given us. We ſhould endeavour to impreſs them upon our Minds, and pray that they may have their proper Effect upon us. This is one Way to have them ſtill preſent with us, when they are removed from us; for by theſe Things, altho' they be dead, we may yet hear them ſpeaking to us. It will be a dreadful Aggravation of their Loſs, if together with the

the Loſs of their Perſons, we loſe the Effect of that Word we have heard from them. Let us therefore ſeriouſly enquire, what Effect their Word has had upon us; and endeavour to revive upon our Spirits the good Impreſſions that were at any Time made upon us thereby, and pray for that Grace from above, that may enable us to live anſwerably to the Deſign thereof? If we are enabled ſo to do, altho' there has been a ſorrowful Parting, there will be a joyful Meeting again, and you will be their Joy and Crown of Rejoicing, in the Preſence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, at his coming. But if otherwiſe, you can expect no other, but that in the great Day they will bear Witneſs againſt you, as thoſe that refuſed Inſtruction, and hated to be reformed, which will dreadfully aggravate your everlaſting Condemnation and Miſery.

4. If we ſhould remember our ſpiritual Guides, who have ſpoken to us the Word of God, and imitate their Faith and Converſation; then you ſee the Duty which you, my Friends of this Church and Congregation, are called to this Day. It hath pleaſed the Lord to remove from you an able Miniſter of the New Teſtament. And as you ought to be, ſo I queſtion not but you are ſenſibly affected with the Greatneſs of the Loſs you have

ſuſtained. As he was ſo well known to you, that I need not, ſo I am forbid (by his Deſire, ſuch was his Humility and Modeſty) to enlarge upon his Character. However, I can't forbear mentioning a few Things from my own Obſervation, and the Account I have received of him.

It is to little Purpoſe to tell you of his Parentage and Deſcent. His Education was both learned and pious. He had ſerious Impreſſions about Religion betimes, and was early taught the Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and the Way of Life and Salvation by him. And being deſigned therein to inſtruct others alſo, and a Genius for Learning diſcovering itſelf in him; after he had paſſed thro' the ſeveral Forms of the Grammar-School, he entered upon Academical Studies in the Country *, and finiſhed them in *London*, under the Direction of a Tutor †, whoſe Praiſe is in the Churches, and who was eminently uſeful in forming the Minds of many for great Service in their Generation; under whoſe Inſtructions he added to his natural Abilities many excellent acquired Accompliſhments. He was poſſeſſed of a quick Apprehenſion, and a ſtrong penetrating Judgment. He was really a Perſon of

* At *Sheffield*, under the Rev. Mr. *John Wadſworth*.

† The late Rev. Dr. *Thomas Ridgley*.

good

good Senſe and Learning; and as he was furniſhed with a great Meaſure of uſeful Knowledge, ſo he had an eaſy and happy Way of conveying his Ideas.

If we conſider him as a Preacher, he was a *Scribe, well inſtructed in the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, and ſhunned not to declare the whole Counſel of God.* His Compoſures were very exact, his Reaſoning ſolid and forceable, and his Delivery grave and ſerious. The Subjects he choſe to diſcourſe upon, were generally, as I am informed, the moſt uſeful and important, and ſuch as were ſuited to affect the Minds of Men with reſpect to their great and everlaſting Concernments. In all his Diſcourſes there appeared a great Spirit of Seriouſneſs, and a becoming Concern for the Glory of God, the Kingdom and Intereſt of Chriſt, the Honour of Religion, and the Good of Souls. And his own Heart being warmed, he ſeldom failed of warming the Hearts of others. He had a very ſucceſsful Way of addreſſing Perſons under Temptation and Diſtreſs of Mind, and an happy Skill in anſwering and removing the Doubts and Fears of diſcouraged Chriſtians. He greatly lamented the growing Errors and Corruptions of the Times, and manifeſted a juſt and commendable Zeal for the great and important Truths of the Goſpel, from which there

there is ſo great a Defection, and upon which ſo great Contempt is poured in the Day in which we live. But he knew how, both in Sentiment and Practice, to diſtinguiſh between Zeal againſt the corrupt Opinions and Practices, and Charity to the Perſons of thoſe that differed from him. And how grave and ſerious; how meek and humble; how ſincere and faithful, without Flattery; how prudent and condeſcending, without any unbecoming Meanneſs of Spirit or Conduct; how diligent in watching over you; and how uſeful and ſucceſsful he was in the Work of his Office, you know better than I can inform you. In a Word, as *he obtained Mercy of the Lord to be faithful*; ſo he was careful to live as he preached, and to be an Example to his Flock; his Life being holy and unblameable, as his Doctrine was pure and uncorrupt.

THUS he lived in the Faith, and he died in the Comfort of it. He was enabled to meet the laſt Enemy without Fear and Amazement, and with a holy Serenity and Fortitude of Mind, *knowing in whom he had believed.* He was truly reſigned to the Divine Pleaſure and Diſpoſals, declaring, that "Should the Lord leave it to him "to chooſe, whether Life or Death, he "would refer it back again to him to de-"termine for him." It was a noble Te-

ſtimony he bare to the Truths he had preached, when he profeſſed to venture his eternal All upon them; and deſired ſeveral Friends to bear witneſs, that "he died "in the Faith, and had the Comfort of "them." He declared, that the Ground and Foundation of his Hope and Expectation of Pardon and Acceptance with God to eternal Life, were the free Grace of God in Chriſt, and that everlaſting Righteouſneſs which Chriſt has wrought out by his active and paſſive Obedience, and which is to, and upon all them that believe; ſaying, that "tho' he could not "charge himſelf with any great and un-"common Wickedneſs, yet he was con-"ſcious to himſelf of ſo many Failings, "and Imperfections, and ſuch is the Pu-"rity and Perfection of the Law of God, "that if he ſhould be tried by that, he "muſt be condemned; and that there-"fore (as he needed, ſo) he fled for Re-"fuge to that better Hope which Chriſt "has brought in." And there is no Reaſon to queſtion, but he has attained the End of his Faith and Converſation in a bleſſed and glorious Eternity.

THIS, my Friends, is the Perſon whom God has removed from you; a ſpiritual Guide; an able, uſeful, ſkilful Miniſter, eminently qualified and fitted for his Work; a Work-man that needed not

to

to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth; who made it his Endeavour, by Manifeſtation of the Truth, and living according to it, to commend himſelf to your Conſciences in the Sight of God.

But he is gone; your Miniſter, your Paſtor, that had the Rule over you, Chriſtians, is gone, ſuddenly cut off in the Prime of his Days *, and in the midſt of his Uſefulneſs. He hath finiſhed his Work upon Earth, and an End is put to his uſeful Labours among you. He hath ſpoken to you the Word of God; but he hath ſpoken his laſt, and will ſpeak no more in this World. His Place knows him no more. This Pulpit, this Congregation know him no more. You will never ſee his Face, never hear his Voice more. Sinners, you will no more hear him teſtifying to you the Neceſſity of Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Nor will you, O Believers, ever hear him more exhorting, admoniſhing, or comforting you. In how many Inſtances ſoever God was pleaſed to honour and render his Miniſtrations profitable to you, they are now at an End, ſo far as they reſpect him, and you will hear or converſe with him no more, either as a private Friend, or a publick Teacher.

* He was not full twenty-eight Years of Age.

While he was with you, he was a burning and a ſhining Light, and you rejoiced in his Light for a Seaſon. (Alas, for how ſhort a Seaſon!) But he is now taken out of this Candleſtick, and gone to ſhine in the Kingdom of his Father.. He will be with you no more, to inform your Minds, to inſtruct you in your Duty, to diſpenſe the Bread of Life to you, to adviſe you by his Counſels, to anſwer your Doubts, to help and aſſiſt you in your Temptations, to pity and pray for, and comfort you under your Troubles, corporal or ſpiritual. There are, doubtleſs, not a few, who remember how ſerviceable he was to them in all theſe Regards. But you can have no further Benefit or Aſſiſtance from him. His next Appearance will be in the Capacity of a Witneſs, either for or againſt you, in the great Day. But in this World you will ſee him no more, hear, and converſe with him no more. No; having ſerved his Generation by the Will of God, he is fallen aſleep, fallen aſleep in Jeſus, and therefore is himſelf unſpeakably the Gainer. But your Loſs! how great is your Loſs! A Loſs ſo publick, ſo general, a Loſs to his Family, a Loſs to this Church, and to the whole Diſſenting Intereſt! And ought you not to be affected with it? Now a righteous

Man,

Man, and a faithful Miniſter, is taken away, we ought to lay it to Heart.

But if we be indeed ſenſible of it, let us not *mourn as thoſe that are without Hope*. Humbled we ought to be under, but we ſhould take heed of repining at the Hand of God. Let us rather *conſider the End of his Converſation*, and be excited thereby *to remember*, ſo *as to follow his Faith*, and imitate his Example, ſo far as he followed Chriſt, our only perfect Pattern. Frequently call to Mind the Truths he hath preached to you, and continue in the Things you have heard of him, in the Faith and Order of the Goſpel. Be careful to evidence, by the Frame and Temper of your Spirits, and the Holineſs of your Converſations, that he hath not ſpoken to you the Word of God in vain.

And keep up a firm Faith and Truſt in God. Altho' you have received a ſevere Stroke; yet conſider who hath done it: And let this teach you an holy Submiſſion to, and a ſilent Acquieſcence in the Will of God. It has pleaſed the Lord to viſit this Church with Breach upon Breach: This being the third Paſtor taken from you in about ten Years*. And as this

* The Rev. Mr. *Nesbitt* died *Oct.* 22. 1727.
The Rev. Mr. *Hurrion*, *Dec.* 31. 1731.

looks

looks like a ſore Rebúke of Providence upon you, it concerns you to be enquiring, *wherefore the Lord thus contendeth with you?* You ought with a godly Jealouſy to be looking into your Hearts, and reflecting upon your paſt Frames and Conduct; and pray that the Lord would teach you the End and Deſign of theſe awful Diſpenſations, and enable you ſincerely to comply with the ſame. *Deſpiſe not theſe Chaſtenings of the Lord. But at the ſame Time take heed of fainting, when you are rebuked of him* †. Deſpond not under your preſent Burden; but look up to the great Shepherd of the Sheep, who always lives, and *is the ſame Yeſterday, to Day, and for ever* †, with whom is the Reſidue of the Spirit, and who *is feelingly touched with the Wants* and Neceſſities of his People: And improve the paſt Experience you have had of his Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, and Faithfulneſs, as a Motive and Encouragement, in your preſent Diſtreſs, to be truſting in him, and waiting for him. Continue to *walk in the Truth, as it is in Jeſus:* Cleave to him in the Way of Duty; and *be at Peace amongſt your ſelves.* And then, you may encourage your ſelves to hope, that the God of Truth and Peace

* Heb. xii. 5. † Ver. 8. of the Context.

will

will be with you; and in his good Time will provide ſuitably for you, and make up this ſore Breach, to his Glory, and your Comfort and Edification. To cloſe all,

MAY the God of all Grace and Comfort ſanctify this Diſpenſation (as to this Church, ſo) to the ſurviving Relatives of the worthy Perſon deceaſed, and to every one of us. May he be an Husband and Comforter to the diſconſolate Widow. May ſhe be enabled to *make the everlaſting God, the Lord, her Refuge; and underneath her may there be his everlaſting Arms* *. May ſhe be helped to truſt in him, and find *his Grace ſufficient for her* on this and every trying Occaſion. May this Correction be attended with ſpiritual Inſtruction, and ſuitable Support to the other Relations. And may we all by this Providence, be excited to *a due Conſideration of our latter End* †; *and be taught ſo to number our Days, as to apply our Hearts unto Wiſdom* §; to the Knowledge and Practice of ſerious Religion; to ſeek an Intereſt in a living Redeemer; to commit our Souls into his Hands; to be waſhed in his Blood; to be cloathed with his Righteouſneſs, and renewed and ſanctified

* Deut. xxxiii. 27. † Chap. xxxii. 29.
§ Pſal. xc. 12.

by

by his Spirit; and to give all Diligence, by a faithful Improvement of every Talent, and filling up the Duty of every Relation, that we may be found of him in Peace at his coming.

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